

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

May 7, 2012

The Honorable Patrick R. Donahoe
Postmaster General and CEO
United States Postal Service
475 L'Enfant Plaza SW
Washington, D.C. 20260-0010

Dear Postmaster General Donahoe,

We are writing to express our support for extending the moratorium on post office and mail processing center closures, which is set to expire on May 15, 2012.

As you know, on April 25, 2012, the Senate passed the *21st Century Postal Service Act of 2012* and, during the course of that debate, expressed its will on several issues relating to postal closings. In particular, the Senate passed by voice vote an amendment expressing the sense of the Senate that the Postal Service should not close or consolidate any post offices or mail processing centers until the bill is enacted into law, and another amendment prohibiting the closing of rural post offices for 12 months in communities that raise significant opposition to the closures.

The underlying bill also requires the Postal Service to develop, within 6 months, minimal service standards for communities without post offices and prohibits their closure until those standards are developed. It also preserves overnight delivery of first class mail within certain geographic areas, which you tentatively estimated could possibly result in more mail processing centers remaining open.

To be clear, we voted against the *21st Century Postal Service Act of 2012* because we believe that it does not adequately protect rural communities in West Virginia and other states from being targeted for disproportionate cuts in jobs and services, and does not do enough to require the Postal Service to rein in costs and increase revenue elsewhere. Further, the minimal protections described above do not in any way prevent the future closure of more than 150 post offices in our state, and provide insufficient assurances that you will keep open the 6 mail processing centers that are slated to close in West Virginia.

Despite our concerns about the legislation, we do believe that extending the existing moratorium while Congress continues to work on postal reform legislation will at least preserve services and jobs for West Virginia communities in the short-term. It also makes practical sense for Congress and the Postal Service, considering that even the minimal consumer protections contained in the bill are premised on the Postal Service's existing retail and mail processing network. Any decision to close these post offices and other facilities before the legislation is finalized would certainly require the Senate to reconsider its legislation and determine whether the bill's provisions must be changed in light of the Postal Service's new, less comprehensive retail and mail processing network.

Letter to Postmaster General Donahoe

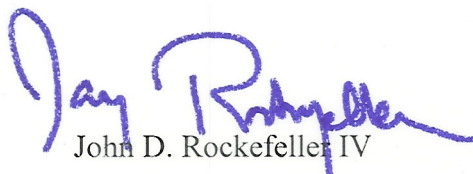
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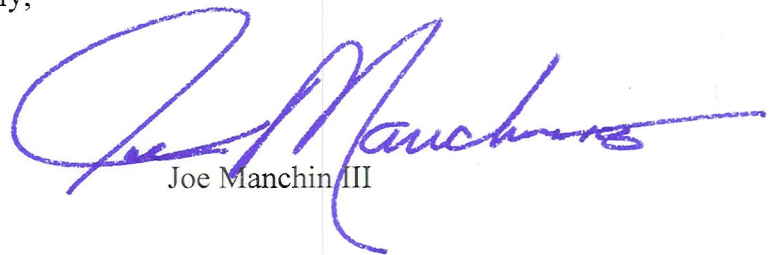
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Ultimately, our hope is that you will altogether reconsider the many drastic cuts that the Postal Service continues to make in West Virginia. We fully understand your need to cut costs and modernize the Postal Service, but strongly encourage you to look more broadly at your network to make sure that rural communities and others who lack alternatives to the Postal Service do not suffer the brunt of your cost-cutting measures. In the meantime, we believe that extending this moratorium on postal closings is a prudent measure given the current state of the legislative process and the needs of employees, consumers, and businesses in West Virginia and around the country.

Thank you in advance for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,


John D. Rockefeller IV


Joe Manchin III